

Please enter the following amended claims:

1-11 (canceled).

12 (currently amended). A method for distinguishing splice variants in a mixed mRNA sample, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a mixed mRNA sample, said mixed mRNA sample comprising a plurality of splice variants, each one of said plurality of splice variants containing a distinct exon-exon junction not found in each other of said plurality of splice variants;

(b) providing an array, said array comprising a plurality of different primers immobilized on a solid support at distinct locations thereon, with each of said plurality of different primers selectively hybridizing to a corresponding one of said distinct exon-exon junctions to form a duplex therebetween;

(c) contacting said mixed mRNA sample to said array so that a duplex is formed between each different primer and each corresponding splice variant if said corresponding splice variant is included in said mixed mRNA sample;

(d) subjecting said duplexes to a primer extension reaction so that the primers in said duplexes are extended with at least one labeled base; and then

(e) detecting the presence or absence of said labeled base in each of said plurality of primers, the presence of said at least one labeled base indicating the presence of the splice variant to which said primer selectively binds in said mixed mRNA sample, wherein:

a plurality of said splice variants contains an exon-exon junction comprising a common exon segment coupled to a variable exon segment, with said common exon segment being the same among said plurality of splice variants and said variable exon segments being different among said plurality of splice variants;

a plurality of said primers contains a common primer segment coupled to a variable primer segment, with the common primer segment corresponding to said common exon segment and being the same among said plurality of primers, and with said variable primer segment corresponding to said variable exon segment and being different

among said plurality of primers; and

said common primer segments are from 8 to 50 nucleotides in length and are positioned at the 5' end of said primers, and said variable primer segments are from 2 to 7 nucleotides in length and are positioned at the 3' end of said primers.

13 (original). The method according to claim 12, wherein said plurality of splice variants comprises at least three splice variants.

14 (currently amended). The method of claim ~~12~~ 11, wherein said detecting step (e) is followed by the step of:

(f) determining the presence of at least three distinct splice variants in said sample from said detected presence or absence of said labeled base in each of said plurality of primers.

15 (canceled).

16 (original). The method according to claim 12, wherein said mRNA comprises mRNA fragments.

17 (original). The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of fragmenting said mRNA prior to said contacting step.

18 (original). The method according to claim 12, wherein said primer extension reaction is carried out with a reverse transcriptase having a deleted RNase H segment.

19 (original). The method according to claim 12, wherein said primers are immobilized to said solid support by the 5' end thereof so that the 3' ends of said primers are available to be extended in said primer extension reaction.

20 (original). The method of claim 12, wherein said mRNA is provided from a biological sample.

21 (original). The method according to claim 12, wherein said mRNA is produced by polymerization from a corresponding cDNA.

22 (original). The method according to claim 12, wherein said mRNA is CD44 mRNA.

23 (amended). A method according to claim 12, wherein said detecting ~~the~~ step is followed by the steps of:

(f) generating a plurality of values, each of said values indicating the presence or absence of each of said exons in said mRNA; and then

(g) generating a code representing the exons present in said mRNA from said plurality of generated values.

24 (original). The method of claim 23, wherein each of said values is a digital value, and said code is a digital code.

25 (original). The method of claim 23, wherein each of said values is a binary value, and said code is a binary code.

26 –40 (canceled)